



# 1999–2000 CATS ASSESSMENT

## Open-Response Item Scoring Worksheet

### Grade 4 – Reading

#### Type of Passage: Literary

The **academic expectation** addressed by the open-response item “First Light” is

1.2 Students make sense of a variety of materials they read.

The **core content** addressed by this item includes:

RD-E-1.0.6 Explain the meaning of a passage taken from texts appropriate for elementary school students.

RD-E-1.0.8 Describe the characters, plot, setting, and problem/solution of a passage.

RD-E-1.0.9 Explain a character’s actions based on a passage.

#### First Light

In the story “First Light,” Matthew woke up in another time period, the 1850s.

- Describe FOUR things Matthew discovered that were different from what he was used to in his present life.
- Explain how each of those differences affected him. Use information from the story to support your answer.



# SCORING GUIDE

## Grade 4 Reading

Score	Description
4	Student clearly describes four things from the story that represent differences in time periods. Student clearly explains how each of these differences affected Matthew. Explanation is supported by information from the story.
3	Student describes four things from the story that represent differences in time periods. Student generally explains how each of these differences affected Matthew. <b>OR</b> Student clearly describes two or three things from the story that represent differences in time periods. Student clearly explains how each of these differences affected Matthew. Explanation is supported by information from the story.
2	Student identifies two to four things from the story that represent differences in time periods. Student's explanation of how these differences affected Matthew is limited.
1	Student's response is minimal (e.g., student identifies one thing from the story that represents a difference in time periods).
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

### Some possible differences:

- no electricity
- wagon/prairie schooner
- language (e.g., “reckon,” “nooning” vs. “awesome”)
- clothing
- cooking process and food (e.g., hard bread, beans, and coffee for breakfast)
- oxen for transportation
- Franklin Pierce was president
- no towns, houses, cars, or fences
- landscape is natural, quiet, and peaceful

### Some effects on Matthew:

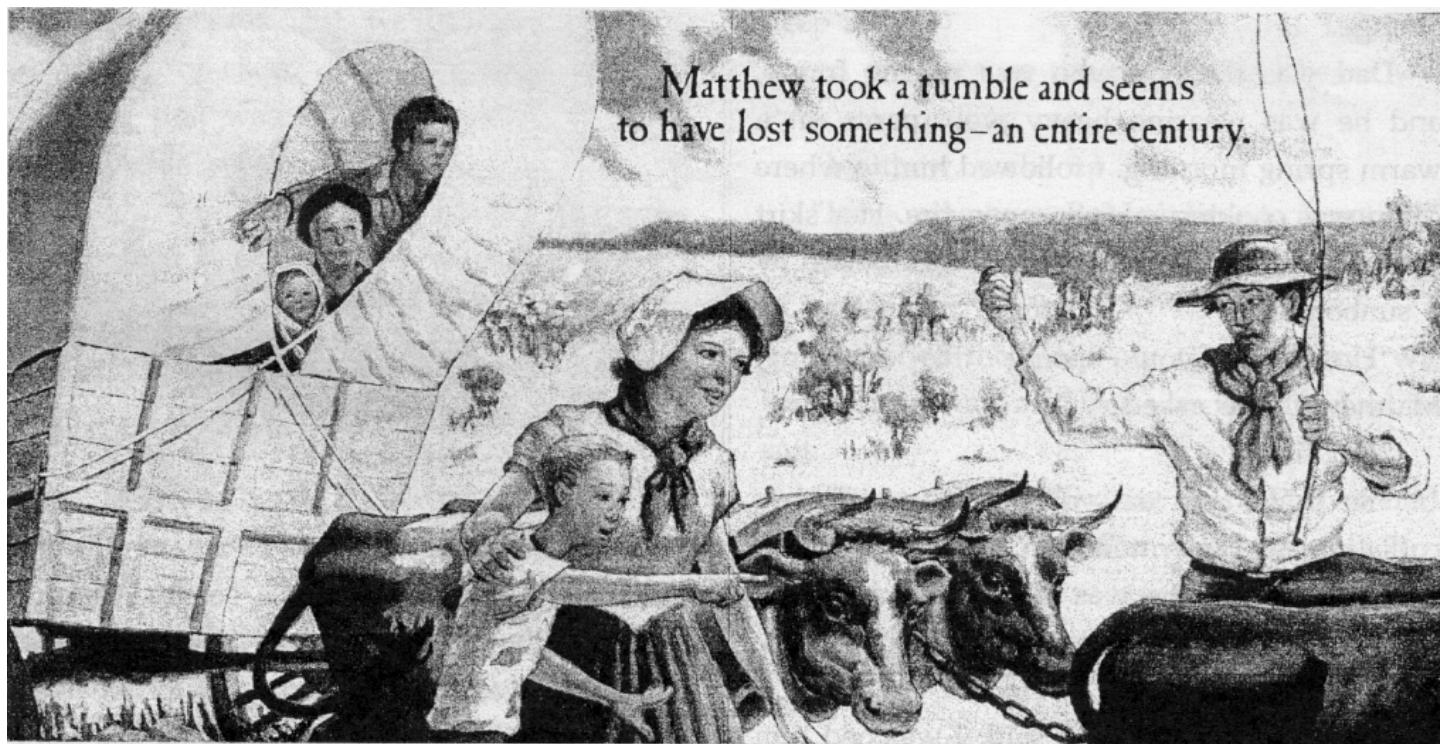
- He had difficulty eating beans for breakfast.
- The lunch food on the Oregon Trail made him think longingly of the food he was used to eating.
- At the end, after waking up, he walked to school without complaint.



## READING PASSAGE

### Grade 4 Reading

*Read the following story to find out what happens when a boy wakes up one morning to a strange discovery. Then answer the questions.*



## First Light

by Sue Allen

“Wake up, Matthew.”

“It’s still dark,” I said to my father.

“Of course it is. We always move on before first light.”

“Move where?” I asked. I sat up and hit my head on something hard. I was tangled up in my blanket, but I wasn’t in my bed. I’d been sleeping on the floor.

“Could you turn the light on?” I asked.

“The oil lamp is burning, and the sun’s coming up. Your ma’s cooking breakfast.”

Something was wrong. We didn’t use oil lamps.

“Did we have a power failure?”

“A what?” Dad asked.

“Did the electricity go out?”

“Son, crawl out of there. Your chores are waiting.”

I rolled out and stood up. I was in front of a wagon—the kind I’d seen in old movies. I looked around, and there were lots of prairie schooners just like the one I’d been sleeping under.

“Where are we?” I asked.

“I reckon we’re in Nebraska Territory,” Dad answered.

“Where are we going?”

“Same place we started out for, west to Oregon.”

“Awesome,” I said.

“Son, ever since you tumbled down that ravine a ways back, you’ve been talking real strange.”

Dad was the one who was talking funny, and he was wearing heavy wool pants on a warm spring morning. I followed him to where Mom was cooking over an open fire. Her skirt touched her ankles, and her face was hidden by a sunbonnet.

“How are you feeling this morning, Matthew?” she asked.

“I’m fine.”

“Sit down and eat your breakfast. There’s coffee, beans, and mountain bread.”

The woman who was talking to me looked like



## READING PASSAGE

### Grade 4 Reading

Mom, but my mother would never let me drink coffee.

"Eat hearty, Son," Dad said. I watched him dip the bread in his coffee.

I tried to eat the bread, but it was so hard and dry that I had trouble swallowing it. I kept looking at the beans, but my stomach couldn't take beans so early in the morning.

"Better yoke up the oxen, Son," Dad said.

"Sure thing," I answered, even though I didn't know how to hitch up a horse, much less yoke up an ox.

"Charles, I'm worried. Ever since Matthew took that spill, he hasn't been himself," Mom said.

"I'll keep my eye on the boy," Dad promised.

Oxen are big animals, and at first I was scared, but they were gentle. The biggest ox slipped into his yoke, and the others followed. I heard a trumpet in the distance and hoped it was cavalry coming to rescue me. "Who's playing the horn?" I asked.

"You know as well as I do that's our signal to move out."

"Sure thing, Pa." I decided I'd better go with the flow, and calling him Pa seemed right.

I was about to climb into the wagon when I saw Ma walking next to it. I figured if she was walking, then I would be doing the same. It was going to be a very long hike from Nebraska to Oregon.

We walked together, and the sun was beating down on us. It was dusty, and I was tired, hot, and thirsty. Mom's aerobics classes had paid off. I was having trouble keeping up with her.

"How come we're not taking a train to Oregon?" I asked. I was sure airplanes hadn't been invented, but it seemed safe to mention trains.

"Land sakes alive!" Ma cried. "You're talking foolishness. There aren't any trains out here."

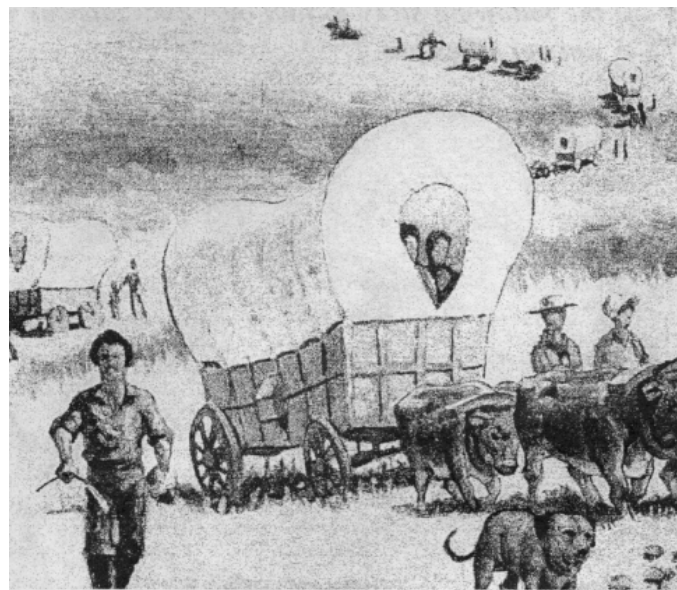
"What year is it?" I didn't know any way to find out other than asking directly.

"Matthew, you don't recollect what year it is?"

I knew it had to be somewhere between 1800 and 1900, but the odds of my picking the right year weren't good.

"President Franklin Pierce was elected last year," Ma said.

I know that was supposed to clear things up, but it didn't. President Pierce wasn't one of those famous presidents we'd spent a lot



of time on in history class.

"And that was 18... 18..."

"52," Ma said.

"Right, Ma. I remember now."

The sun was overhead when the wagons halted.

"I reckon it's time for nooning," Ma said.

She sliced up some of the same bread we'd had for breakfast and poured cold leftover coffee into tin cups. I chewed on the bread, wishing it were a juicy apple, microwave popcorn, or a frosty glass of milk. We needed to do some serious grocery shopping.

After we ate, we rested. The land around us was wide open. There weren't any towns, houses, cars, or fences. I could see for miles. Purple wildflowers were blooming, and the sky was deep blue. It was quiet and peaceful. I guess I dozed off, because the next thing I heard was Pa's voice calling me.

"Matthew, wake up."

"Is nooning over, Pa? Is it time to move on?"

"Son, if you don't 'move on,' you're going to be late for school."

I brushed the sleep out of my eyes. I was back in my room, and Dad was wearing his blue suit.

"Hurry up, and I'll drive you," Dad offered.

"Thanks, Dad, but I'm going to walk."

After all, if my ancestors had walked to Oregon, I figured I could walk to school.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 4 Reading

### Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

Student describes the use of an “oil lamp” for light as one of the time period differences. Student clearly explains how this difference affected Matthew, including information from the story to support the explanation (i.e., Matthew couldn’t see by the light of the oil lamp and hit his head in the dark).

Student describes “food” as one of the time period differences. Student clearly explains how this difference affected Matthew, including information from the story to support the explanation (i.e., the food given to Matthew was stale which affected the amount of food he ate and caused him to be hungry).

#### Student Response

There are some things in the story that affected Matthew.

One of them is light. The only light that they had in the wagon was an oil lamp, which doesn’t give off much light. Since Matthew couldn’t see in the darkness, he hit his head.

Then there’s transportation. The transportation they were using was a prairie schooner. There was not enough room in the prairie schooner for Matthew, so he had to walk. This caused him to get tired.

Another is food. The food he had to eat was stale, and he didn’t drink coffee. He probably didn’t eat much and got very hungry.

Student describes the use of a “prairie schooner” for transportation as one of the time period differences. Student clearly explains how this difference affected Matthew, including information from the story to support the explanation (i.e., Matthew did not ride in the schooner, but walked, and this walking caused Matthew to be tired).

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# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 4 Reading

Student accurately states that the “time” was different from his present life, but since this is stated in the prompt this difference is not counted as one of the four differences.



Something else that affected him was time. The time is the thing that affected him most. It is the cause of everything else that happened. In the time Matthew was in, they hadn't invented as many things as in modern times.

The last thing that affected him was talk. When he heard how they talk, he started talking like they did. He got used to it. Whenever he woke up, he accidentally used some of the old talk to his Dad.



Student describes “talk” as one of the time period differences. Student clearly explains how this difference affected Matthew, including information from the story to support the explanation (i.e., Matthew started talking in the same manner as those around him and even used some of the different language when he woke up).

Overall, the student demonstrates a strong understanding of the literary reading passage (i.e., a short story with an historical context). The student clearly describes four things from the story that represent time period differences, clearly explains how each of these differences affected Matthew (the main character in the story), and includes information from the story to support the explanation.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 4 Reading

### Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

A. One thing that Matthew discovered that was different was the food. He ate beans, bread, and coffee for breakfast and he wasn't used to that. Matthew also wasn't used to yoking the oxen, walking instead of riding in the wagon or in a car, and he wasn't used to not having electricity.

B. The way the food affected him was that he didn't like it. The bread was hard and he couldn't swallow it, he couldn't even eat the beans that early in the morning, and he was very surprised when his mom said she made coffee for him. The way yoking the oxen affected him was he was scared but then he saw that the oxen were gentle and they would slip right into the yokes. He wasn't used to walking because he said he was tired and hot and his mom kept getting ahead of him. And when he found out there was no electricity he knew something was wrong.

← Student clearly describes four things from the story that represent time period differences (i.e., food, such as beans, bread, and coffee for breakfast; yoking the oxen; walking instead of riding in a car; and not having electricity).

← Student clearly explains how each of the four things affected Matthew, including information from the story in the explanation (i.e., he couldn't swallow the hard bread and he was surprised at the offer of coffee; he was scared of the oxen at first but then learned they were gentle; he wasn't used to walking and got tired and hot; and the absence of electricity caused him to think that something was wrong).

Overall, the student demonstrates a strong understanding of the literary reading passage (i.e., a short story with an historical context). The student clearly describes four things from the story that represent time period differences, clearly explains how each of these differences affected Matthew (the main character in the story), and includes information from the story to support the explanation.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 4 Reading

### Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

A. In the Story first light Mathew discovered that they didn't use electricity instead they use old fashion oil lamps in the 1850's. And Mathew discovered that they used schooners like the one he was sleeping under. Another thing he discovered was that they didn't use microwaves. After the confusion he discovered there wasn't any towns nor cars.

B. These differences affected him by not seeing very well early in the morning because of using oil lamps and they don't produce much light.

That morning he woke up he seen so many wagons or schooners the problem from this is having to yoke up the oxen and they go slow.

He noticed they didn't use microwaves and the problem was he didn't like the food they fixed and he wishes he could have popcorn.

The only problem with not having town's nor cars was they couldn't buy supplies.

Student describes four things from the story that represent time period differences (i.e., oil lamps, prairie schooners, absence of microwaves, and absence of towns and cars).

Student clearly explains how three of the things affected Matthew, including information from the story in the explanation (i.e., he couldn't see very well in the morning by the light of the oil lamp; the use of prairie schooners meant he had to yoke up the oxen; he didn't like the food offered and would have liked some microwave popcorn).

Student attempts to explain how "not having town's nor cars" affected Matthew (i.e., "they couldn't buy supplies"), but the explanation is not based on information from the story.

Overall, the student demonstrates a general understanding of the literary reading passage (i.e., a short story with an historical context). The student describes four things that represent time period differences; clearly explains how three of these things affected Matthew (the main character in the story), including information from the story in the explanation; and attempts to explain how the fourth thing affected Matthew, but the explanation is not based on information from the story.





# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 4 Reading

### Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

A. Five things that were different from the 1850's are:

1. dialogue (like Ma and Pa)
2. travel (prairie schooner)
3. clothing (wool pants)
4. beds (floor)
5. food (coffee and mountain bread).

B. He was affected by these differences because he did not eat very much breakfast. They thought he was feeling funny. Blending in with their dialogue.



Student describes five things that represent time period differences (i.e., dialogue, means of travel, clothing, place for sleeping, type of food).



Student provides a limited explanation of how two of these things affected Matthew (i.e., "he did not eat very much breakfast" and "blending in with their dialogue").

Overall, the student demonstrates some understanding of the literary reading passage (i.e., a short story with an historical context). The student describes five things that represent time period differences and provides a limited explanation of how two of these things affected Matthew (the main character in the story).



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 4 Reading

### Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

Matthew was a bad kid. he didnt lissen to his forther or mother he didnt do his chores. he roald out and stoop up. I was in front of the wagon the kind he seen in the old moves. he didnt lisson to his porrants and that is what he gets.



Student makes a reference to one thing that represents a difference in the time periods (i.e., the type of wagon “seen in the old moves”) and includes some information from the story (i.e., Matthew rolled out from under the wagon and stood up).

Overall, the student demonstrates a minimal understanding of the literary reading passage (i.e., a short story with an historical context) by describing one thing that represents a difference in the time periods.



# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

## Grade 4 Reading

The open-response item “**First Light**” was designed to address students’ ability to (1) read and understand a literary text, (2) understand the characters, plot, and setting of a story, and (3) explain a character’s actions based on the text. The instructional strategies below present ideas for helping students explore and master these skills.

Create a text set that includes fiction and non-fiction books on the same or related topics. Pairing these two types of text can help learners think critically about content. An example of such a pairing is *West to Opportunity: The Diary of Teresa* and *Children of the Wild West*. Other titles may include: *Pioneer Girl: Growing Up on the Prairie*, *Cassie’s Journey: Going West in the 1860’s*, *Daily Life in a Covered Wagon*, the *Dear America* series, *Going West*, *Pioneer Girl: The Story of Laura Ingalls Wilder*, *Prairie Willow*, *Historic Communities*, various maps, and Scholastic Newspaper books. Text sets will enhance connections among texts and build understanding both of individual texts and of the relationships among various works.

Share selected texts with characters in the midst of dilemmas or endings that leave the reader wondering. These books have greater potential for instruction in strategies such as prediction, summarizing, identifying story elements, and analyzing characters’ behaviors. Picture books set in strange cultures or unfamiliar historical periods result in more interest than predictable books or ones without problems (Harvey and Goudvis, 2000).

Use short texts that encourage thinking and demand the reader ask questions, infer meaning, or synthesize information (Harvey and Goudvis, 2000).

Use visualization or guided imagery to motivate and help children who are visual learners become more engaged with the text. Most students could readily visualize many of the hardships experienced by pioneers traveling west (Buehl, 1995).

Use timelines with visual/pictorial representations, Venn diagrams, webbing/mapping, charts, and graphic organizers so students can make connections and understand concepts.

Word Walls (Cunningham, 1995) and Talking Walls (Knight, 1992) aid in word study by providing students with a constant reference to vocabulary.

Context clues are a vocabulary strategy often used by proficient readers. Context clues are often, but not always, embedded in the sentence that contains the difficult word. Students need to know that reading the preceding and following sentence or sentences may also provide information about a word’s meaning.

Many context clues occur after unfamiliar terms are first encountered; therefore, an important strategy is to continue reading. The clarifying information may occur in the next few sentences or the next paragraph. By reading on, the reader continues the flow of thought, which is a major factor that contributes to comprehension.



# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

## Grade 4 Reading

### Bibliography

Buehl, D. (1995). Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning. Schofield, Wisconsin: Wisconsin State Reading Association.

Cunningham, P. (1995). Phonics They Use: Words for Reading and Writing. New York, N.Y.:Harper-Collins College.

Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2000). Strategies That Works: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding. York, Maine: Stenhouse.

Knight, M. (1992). Talking Walls. Gardiner, Maine: Tibury House.